



# THE NATURE OF VOLUNTEERING

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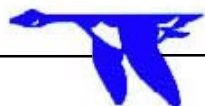
EXPLORE THE WONDERS OF NATURE - VOLUNTEER

Fall 2007

## Wildlife Refuges are Places of Wonder

### DID YOU KNOW ...

- The Refuge System protects a rich diversity of fish and wildlife — more than 700 species of birds, 220 mammals, 250 reptile and amphibian species, and more than 1,000 types of fish. More than 280 of the nation's approximately 1,310 endangered or threatened species find a home on national wildlife refuges.
- Fifty-nine wildlife refuges were established specifically for the benefit of threatened and endangered species.
- For some species, national wildlife refuges have - literally - been lifesavers. Without national wildlife refuges, the United States could well have lost the whooping crane, North America's tallest bird.
- The Refuge System hosts some of the nation's largest concentrations of bald eagles and takes pride in its role in bringing back America's majestic bird from the brink of extinction. People can see bald eagles on more than 150 national wildlife refuges.
- Every year spectacular flocks of birds, such as ring-necked ducks, use national wildlife refuges as resting places as they fly thousands of miles south for the winter and return north for summer.



**AMERICA'S  
NATIONAL  
WILDLIFE  
REFUGES ...**

*Wild Things*

*where wildlife  
comes naturally!*

## NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK Time to Connect With Nature

Hearing wolves howl, tagging monarch butterflies, snapping pictures of soaring eagles, or just walking in the woods, thousands of Americans made a special connection with nature during National Wildlife Refuge Week, taking place October 7-13, 2007.

The National Wildlife Refuge System, with 547 national wildlife refuges nationwide, protects approximately 97 million acres of fish and wildlife habitat. Scores of national wildlife refuges offered special programs to help celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week across the country.

The week also highlights the six wildlife-dependent recreation uses offered on national wildlife refuges: hunting, fishing, wildlife photography, wildlife observation, interpretation and environmental education. The weeklong celebration is also part of a yearlong commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of pioneering conservationist and writer Rachel Carson.

"Sixty years ago, Rachel Carson wrote that wildlife refuges provide a 'release from the tensions of modern life,'" said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director H. Dale Hall. "They do that, and more. National wildlife refuges also promise outdoor adventure to children growing up in a digital age, whose idea of nature might be watching animals on television. Refuges offer the real thing."

Last year, more than 39 million people visited America's national wildlife refuges. There is at least one national wildlife refuge in every state, and residents of most metropolitan areas can find a national wildlife refuge less than an hour's drive from their front door.

The National Wildlife Refuge System's more than 2,500 miles of land and water trails appeal to visitors who come to bird watch, fish, hunt, photo-graph nature, hike, or just to be outdoors.

"Once people know about the great things we do, they flock to national wildlife refuges, whether as visitors or volunteers,"



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# CHIEF'S CORNER



Geoffrey L. Haskett  
National Wildlife Refuge  
System Chief

## Refuges' New Birding Initiative

National wildlife refuges get about 30 million visits each year from people who appreciate that the National Wildlife Refuge System has the best places in the country to see wildlife and to learn about the inextricable tie between the health of habitat and wildlife. Millions come with binoculars dangling from their necks, eager to see a dazzling variety of birds. They've come to the right place. The Refuge System is bird heaven: Refuges provide habitat for more than 700 species of migratory birds. A third of the Important Bird Areas in the United States are on national wildlife refuges. The Refuge System, the movement for bird conservation and popular bird watching all began at the turn of the 19th century. The Refuge System was launched just three years after the Lacey Act of 1900 banned the transport of wild bird parts across state lines - including the feathers so popular in women's hats. At the same time, more people began to watch birds for recreation. Little wonder then that establishment of the first national wildlife refuge at Pelican Island was to protect brown pelicans, devastated by those who sought their feathers. Occasionally, we need to remind ourselves of our common roots and reinforce connections. That is one aim of a 17-member Birding Team, created by Fish and Wildlife Service Director H. Dale Hall less than a year ago. The Birding Team is not only considering how to harness birders' enthusiasm for their pastime into support for the Refuge System. The team is also looking at how we can make national wildlife refuges even more welcoming to birders and their families. We couldn't have a more prestigious and enthusiastic group of experts from all over the country, made up of Service and non-Service folks alike. The team is led by chair Jon Andrew, Southeast Regional Refuge Chief. Assistant Director for Migratory Birds Paul Schmidt and I are ex-officio team members. National wildlife refuges can use birding to bring real benefits to their communities. One example is the annual Festival of the Cranes at Bosque del Apache Refuge in New Mexico. It fills Socorro hotels and restaurants with people excited to see and photograph

sandhill cranes, waterfowl and raptors. National wildlife refuges already partner with state birding trails and related tour routes. The Great Florida Birding Trail, for one, includes Ding Darling, Hobe Sound and Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee Refuges, among others. Today, the Refuge System is working with the National Scenic Byways Program to improve information on bird watching along many of the 126 Scenic Byways. The Birding Team and the Birding Initiative are outlining important steps to help birders become knowledgeable supporters of the Refuge System and the lands that are the foundation of their love of the outdoors. It's another step in birders' and the Refuge System's long, common history on behalf of wildlife conservation.

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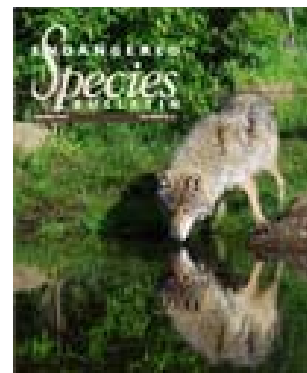
says National Wildlife Refuge System Chief Geoffrey L. Haskett. "We welcome them during National Wildlife Refuge Week and throughout the year."

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, which provides guidance to the Secretary of the Interior for the overall management of the Refuge System. The Act includes a "strong and singular" wildlife conservation mission for the Refuge System and recognizes that six wildlife-dependent recreational uses, when determined to be compatible, are legitimate and appropriate public uses of the Nation's Wildlife Refuges.

*See what's happening at Forsythe in Upcoming Events, page 6.*

Check out the latest edition of the Endangered Species Bulletin, now available at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/bulletin.html>.

This edition focuses on the progress that the Fish and Wildlife Service and our partners are achieving in the recovery of the Nation's threatened and endangered plants and animals.



For more national news go to <http://www.fws.gov/refuges/refugeUpdate/index.html>



## Looking northeast just across the Bay on Little Beach Island and Holgate Piping Plovers: Summer 2007

By Emily Blackman and  
James Brady, plover interns



Emily, Vinny and James  
Photo by Kevin Holcomb

Pale, and with the ink still wet on our diplomas, we arrived at Forsythe as the new Piping Plover interns. Vinny trained us in the art of observing the cryptic plovers and sooner than we anticipated, he turned us loose on the beaches of New Jersey. With the responsibility of protecting an endangered species now in our hands, we stepped up to the challenge of monitoring these birds on long, hot summer days. With the flies biting and the heat bearing down, Vinny shouted, "You ain't seen nothin' yet!" We looked at each other and wondered what the summer held in store for us.

These words rang true as the heat worsened and the greenheads developed a taste for us. However, it was easy to overcome these challenges as we immersed ourselves into the plover community. Our thoughts of keeping cool were overshadowed by the excitement of finding new nests and watching them hatch. We became experts at spotting perfectly camouflaged plover chicks, "cotton-balls with legs," among the shells and sand of the beach. Aside from

closing the beach, there was little we could physically do to protect these struggling birds; our most powerful tool was the exclosure. By the end of the season, we exclosed 12 nests, protecting the eggs from hungry gulls and foxes. The plovers, however, had another survival strategy.

Whenever we approached too close to their nests, they feigned a broken wing. Although effective in nature, we used their display as an aide in finding their nest locations.

Thirty-one pairs of plovers chose the Forsythe Refuge as a good spot to start a new family and they succeeded in producing 18 fledglings. It was exhilarating to watch the plover chicks hatch and grow to near adulthood. They became more and more independent of their parents and wandered farther from their nests as the summer went on. We watched them testing their wings and learning to fly and we knew that soon they would be on their way south to their wintering grounds.

Now, tanned by the sun and inspired by the hard work of wildlife biologists, we are looking forward to using our experiences and new skills to continue forward in fulfilling careers in wildlife conservation.



Piping Plover Eggs

Photo by Kevin Holcomb



Piping Plover with Chick

# LE CORNER



## Protecting Refuge Resources: *Law Enforcement in the National Wildlife Refuge System*

*by Mark Chase*

Change has become a central theme of all U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service activities: change due to the world around us, the budget climate, national demographics and change for the sake of continuous improvement in being stewards of our nation's resources. The National Wildlife Refuge System law enforcement program, perhaps as much or more than any program in the Service, has undergone dramatic change over the past five to six years. The Refuge System used to field a handful of full time officers and more than 600 collateral duty officers - managers, biologists, maintenance workers, outdoor recreation planners and others who devoted an unspecified amount of time to law enforcement activities. Now we employ more than 200 full time officers and another 200 dual-function officers who must devote at least 25 percent of their time to law enforcement. Demands for law enforcement coverage by each officer have increased along with the diversity of crimes these officers confront. Where we used to be primarily game wardens enforcing strict conservation laws, the demands of society now require that Refuge System officers be trained and equipped to deal with the full range of crimes that are occurring on public lands.

Can you believe it is already October? Time certainly has been flying lately. It seems like just yesterday that we were putting up "Area Closed Do Not Enter" signs at Holgate for the Plover closure and now they have already been down a month. The fall to me always signifies the beginning of Law Enforcement's busy season and along with that both the good and the bad. Here is a short list of Pros and Cons to another season at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge:

	PRO	CON
Holgate Reopens	The public gets to once again enjoy one of the last stretches of undeveloped barrier islands left in New Jersey.	Shell collectors in the dunes, short fish, driving in closed areas and dogs in the wilderness area
The bugs are gone	Visitors get to have an experience that is not ruined by biting insects of all varieties.	Folks back into our closed areas: ATV use, kids partying, fires, paintball, etc.
Deer and Waterfowl Hunt Seasons Begin	We get to provide the hunting public a special type of opportunity to use their public land. We accomplish one of Big 6 goals. Wildlife management goals get closer to being realized.	Poaching and illegal baiting
Waterfowl Migration- the wildlife drive gets busy	The birds are here- amazing variety of species coming through on their way south	Speeding, not paying the entry fee, potential for accidents

Even though the Con list can be overwhelming at times, it does not outweigh the pure enjoyment that the fall and a "new" season at Forsythe can bring. My one message to the public would be: Love and Respect your National Wildlife Refuge, the Rules and Regulations are there so that each and everyone of us, now and in future generations, has the same or an enhanced opportunity to appreciate what is special about Forsythe and nature in general.

Enjoy, Refuge Officer Chris Pancila



**The Friends of Forsythe NWR** is a non-profit group established in 1998 to provide support and services to the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in Oceanville, New Jersey. Our goals are:

- Promoting a better understanding of the natural history and environment of Southern New Jersey, the Edwin B. Forsythe NWR and the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- Helping to preserve and enhance the wildlife habitat at this refuge, and to assist the refuge, the Refuge System and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a variety of educational and supportive efforts.



Please consider joining the Friends of Forsythe and help us accomplish these goals. Call 609-748-1535 or visit [www.friendsofforsythe.org](http://www.friendsofforsythe.org)

## The Big Sit!

Ed Bristow

At 5:30 AM -the Refuge gate slides open and three vehicles enter, headed for Gull Pond Tower. In the chilly darkness, three intrepid birders stand, listening for sounds in the night. Venus shines brightly in the east - many stars visible overhead, In the distance are the bright lights of Atlantic City, contrasting sharply with the beauty of the night overhead. Standing in our 17 foot diameter circle, we strain to hear - finally comes a faint hoot in the distance. Great horned owl begins our list. Soon a Song sparrow sounds off in the nearby marsh. The soft whinny of a Screech owl floats in on the night air. The BIG SIT has begun.

As the first light appears in the east, the night shift returns to their roosting spots, Black-crowned night herons returning. Soon, the Great egrets and Snowy egrets begin their flight out to begin feeding. More sounds identify additional species. Soon, a blazing red ball begins its rise through some low-lying clouds - a special treat for the observers. Now birds can be identified by sight and the list grows rapidly. By 10 AM the list contains close to forty species. A couple of visitors from Pennsylvania join us on the tower, manning scopes and binoculars and eager to add to the growing list. The tally sheet is hung up on the fence at the tower base, allowing even those just driving by to check.

The afternoon brings us up over the 50 species mark, but avian activity has diminished, bringing mostly birds already on the list.

The sun slides to the west - the rattling call of a Kingfisher echoes across Gull Pond. Soon it's time for the day shift - the egrets return to the roost. A beautiful sunset awaits. Suddenly, a Cowbird makes a move past the tower. A Boat-tailed grackle glides into the bushes below. The observers bemoan the lack of a Bald eagle. Twilight begins to deepen - suddenly an immature Yellow-crowned night heron flies past, on its way out to the marsh. We stand in despair, wondering if we should call it quits - when the miracle occurs - here comes our Bald eagle gliding slowly past the tower in all its majesty! The BIG SIT is a success! Final tally - 70 species.

Thanks to the intrepid few - Ed Bristow, Kevin Lippert, Chris Arcuri, Anne Harlan, Jay Nichols of Atlantic Audubon and Friends of Forsythe, and visitors Lydia Reichner, Katie Eberhart and Bruce Bayne. Thanks also to all the folks who climbed the tower to say hello and see how we were doing, as well as all who checked us out from their cars.



## News from our Stay Focused Photo Club

Dennis Loughlin

On land, at sea, and in the air—that's where members of our refuge photography group have been since our last issue. Club-sponsored field trips have allowed these shutterbugs to zoom in on the magnificent floral displays at Longwood Gardens, capture panoramic views of New York City from atop Rockefeller Center, and cruise the Delaware Bay to shoot its historic lighthouses. Closer to home—at the monthly meetings here at the refuge, members have been able to sharpen their skills through presentations by Michael Hogan, whose close ups of birds are second to none; by Dr. Ed Bristow, who shared his photos of an African safari; by John Shields on photographing nature; and by Tom Graf on managing digital photos on computers. Staff members from the Woodford-Cedar Run brought some avian visitors from their refuge to ours. To the barred owl and the red-tailed hawk perched on a tree, our camera buffs must have looked like a crowd of paparazzi as they positioned themselves to get the best close ups of these fascinating birds.



The work of *Stay Focused Photo Club* members has been on display at the Galloway Cultural Arts Center Exhibits at the Atlantic County Library. John Shields' photos of the Atlantic City air show took second place honors and Dennis Loughlin's photos "The Bridge to New Hope" and "A Perfect Day in Brigantine" each took first place in separate exhibits. Dennis's "Morning Light" and "King Tut at Franklin Institute" have been on view at recent exhibits at the Noyes Museum. Meanwhile, Barbara Cahan took first place honors in the professional category at the Atlantic City Art Center's Annual Senior's Competition, while Judy Heyman garnered first place and Tom Cray took second place in the amateur category.

*Stay Focused Photo Club* is an affiliate group of the *Friends of Forsythe*. Visit them at their website [www.stayfocusedphotoclub.com](http://www.stayfocusedphotoclub.com). Better yet, visit them at their monthly meeting on the second Saturday of the month. The November 10th meeting will showcase the results of the *Annual Refuge Shoot-out Competition*, where all photographic entries are exclusively shot on wildlife refuges, and judged by professional photographers.



## What's Happening at Your Refuge ...

Ed Bristow



Ryan Hagerty/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The big news of the summer was the discovery of a Roseate spoonbill at Forsythe. This was only the second time this species has been found in New Jersey, wandering far from its normal range in the south. Large numbers of egrets, Glossy ibis, and Clapper rails have been seen regularly, along with terns and skimmers. The resident Peregrine pair hatched out all four eggs and the chicks were successfully banded. Once again, three pair of Ospreys nested on the platforms along the Wildlife Drive. Purple martins did quite well this year. A pair of Phoebe's nested over one of the headquarters building's entrances, fortunately one that is little used. Wood ducks also appeared to have done well.

We hope to see the groundbreaking for the new Visitor Contact Station sometime this fall. With weather cooperating, expectations are for a grand opening next spring or early summer. Visitor services will be provided mainly by the Friends of Forsythe. More volunteers will be needed to provide such services. If you would like to become a part of the Refuge growth, contact Sandy at 609-748-1535 for further information. Necessary training will be provided during the construction phase.

Friends of Forsythe will continue their lecture series, "An Evening at Forsythe" on the first Wednesday evening of each month. Recent talks have included decoy carving, nature photography, and environmental monitoring at the Refuge. Announcements about programs and speakers are posted in the local papers, on local TV stations and the Refuge website, as well as the information areas outdoors near the parking lot. Programs start at 7 p.m. in the main auditorium and are open to all.

"Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you." Frank Lloyd Wright.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Friends of Forsythe Nature Store

Reopened for the Fall season on Labor Day weekend. The store will be open weekends from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Be sure to visit the store for some unique holiday gift ideas, but stop by before December 7, when the store will close for the winter.

**Saturday Morning Bird Van Tours 9 - 11 a.m.** Join experienced birders from the Friends of Forsythe and Atlantic Audubon to see the abundance of birds attracted to the refuge. Meet in front of the Friends Nature Store at the beginning of the Wildlife Drive. Donation fee of \$5.00 per participant.

November 3, 10, 17, 24

### Make a Difference Day - 8 a.m. Saturday, October 27

Make A Difference Day is the nation's largest day of citizens volunteering to make their communities stronger - a day to lend a helping hand! In 2006, 3 million people cared enough to volunteer in their communities.



Join in this national day of doing good by participating in a clean-up at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. This activity is co-sponsored by Galloway Township Clean Communities Program.

Call for more information and to sign up - 609-748-1535 or 652-9265.

**Evening at Forsythe series** (open to the public) continues the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm. in the refuge auditorium.

**Owl Prowl** - 7 p.m. Wednesday, November 7. Meet at Refuge Headquarters auditorium for a special evening walk led by Vinny Turner, wildlife biologist at the Forsythe Refuge. End the evening with hot cider and cookies compliments of our Friends.

**Stay Focused Photo Club** meets the second Saturday of each month at 10 am in the Refuge auditorium.





## **Congressman Saxton Honored by Conservation Coalition as National Wildlife Refuge System Marks Anniversary**

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Representative Jim Saxton (R-3rd) has been honored with an award from the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) in recognition of his work as a steward of the National Wildlife Refuge System. He joined Reps. Michael Castle (R-DE), Norman D. Dicks (D-WA), Ron J. Kind (D-WI), Mike Thompson (D-CA), and Todd Tiahrt (R-KS) in being recognized for their efforts to protect—and adequately fund—the refuge system.

The awards were presented at a Capitol Hill reception sponsored by CARE and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and marked the 10th anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. The landmark legislation laid the framework for a system that today includes 548 refuges representing nearly 100 million acres of the most visually stunning and biologically diverse lands and waters in the U.S. With at least one refuge in every state, the system attracts some 40 million visitors each year.

Congressman Saxton was recognized for his demonstrated commitment to protecting these biologically diverse wild places by helping to form the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus and serving as one of its chairs. In his district, he has worked for the benefit of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.

"I hope the Wildlife Refuge Caucus will be a foundation to draft legislation, obtain funding and generally have a positive impact on wildlife policy," said Saxton, a senior member of the House Natural Resources Committee. "Wildlife refuges have long been underappreciated. I'm honored to accept this award, but I must note it's a strong bipartisan effort. We still have a lot more work to do."

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act mandates a "wildlife first" conservation philosophy, and the system's refuges are home to more than 700 bird species, 220 mammals, and 260 endangered or threatened species. While protecting wildlife is the primary mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the system offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities, including wildlife photography and observation, hunting and fishing, environmental education and interpretation. The system generates some \$1.4 billion in annual revenues.

"The Refuge System faces a budget crisis of extraordinary proportions," said Evan Hirsche, president of the National Wildlife Refuge Association and chair of the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement. "We're grateful to have Congressman Saxton leading the charge for a healthy and vital Refuge System. With his vision, our American wildlife heritage has a fighting chance."



Friends President, Ed Jones (right), makes presentation to Congressman Saxton (center)

Working in partnership since 1995, CARE consists of 22 wildlife, sporting, conservation and scientific groups dedicated to educating Congress and the American public about the Refuge System. Recognizing the value of a healthy system for the wildlife and habitat refuges seek to protect, CARE works to represent the five million national constituents of its member organizations by securing strong investments in these remarkable lands and waters.

Please find additional information on CARE at:

[www.refugenet.org/CARE/CareHome.html](http://www.refugenet.org/CARE/CareHome.html)

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## **Refuge Visitors May Have a Prize Winning Photo in their Cameras**

Help spread the word. . . the annual search for the new photographic image that will adorn the 2009 Federal Recreational Lands Pass — more formally, the America the Beautiful - National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass — is still underway.

December 31 is the deadline for submitting photographs, which can be shot at national wildlife refuges or at any federal recreation site. Judging is expected to be completed next May. In addition to the national recognition, the grand prize winner will receive a number of prizes, one of them a 2008 Ford Escape Hybrid. Thirteen other finalists will also receive prizes, all of them provided by the contest's commercial sponsors.

The photo contest is open to just about everybody except employees of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the other participating federal recreation-land agencies that charge fees. The immediate families of the land agency employees are also barred from the competition. For more information, check out the photo contest Web site: [http://nationalparks.eprize.net/experiencecontest/index.tbapp?affiliate\\_id=1d](http://nationalparks.eprize.net/experiencecontest/index.tbapp?affiliate_id=1d)

***With Fall hot on our heels, this is a wonderful time to visit the Refuge. Look for Fall flowers blooming in the salt marsh and for ducks stopping to rest and feed in Refuge wetlands as they migrate south.***



## WHO'S ON STAFF?

Project Leader  
STEVE ATZERT

Deputy Project Leader  
BRIAN BRAUDIS

Chief of Visitor Services  
ART WEBSTER

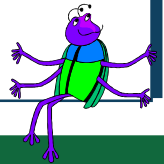
Wildlife Biologists  
VINNY TURNER  
KEVIN HOLCOMB

Refuge Law Enforcement Officer  
CHRIS PANCILA

Administrative Officer  
MARTHA HAND

Volunteer Coordinator  
SANDY PERCHETTI

Maintenance Professionals  
TOM HOLDSWORTH  
ROGER DUTCH



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